

1Interviewee: Jeremy Harris (JH)

2Date: November 11, 2010

3Location: Andy Bushnell's home, Wailua Homesteads, Kaua'i

4Interview Team: Andy Bushnell (AB), Carol Bain (CB)

5Oral History Project 2010: Island Movers & Shakers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

6

7Part 1- Snap: 2:23.9

8AB: Jeremy, good to see you. Um, would you please begin by telling us your name, your date  
9of birth, and your place of birth, and then tell us a little about your family and your formative  
10years before moving to Hawaii.

11JH: My name is Jeremy Harris. I was born December 7, 1950, in Wilmington, Delaware, so I  
12grew up on the East Coast of the United States. And I was a surfer on the Jersey shore from  
13the time I was five or six years old. Uh, and a diver, and always dreamed of Hawaii, never  
14thinking that I would ever get here. And I was just finishing my sophomore year at the university  
15of Delaware, studying biology and ecology, and it was at a time when we were organizing the  
16first Earth Day, and Nixon had just invaded Cambodia, so we marched on Washington. And  
17that night, when we got back from that march, I decided that the East Coast was too far gone  
18and was not salvageable. And so I, got on an airplane with my surfboard and my dive gear,  
19and flew out to Hawaii. I didn't know anybody in Hawaii, but I flew to Hawaii, and walked from  
20the airport up to the university, and transferred from the university of Delaware to the university  
21of Hawaii, and decided that was where I was going to make my stand.

22AB: And it was that easy?

23JH: To transfer?

24AB: Yeah.

25JH: It was easy to transfer [laugh], making the shift from an East Coast culture to the Hawaii  
26culture was quite a shift, but transferring between universities was easy.

27[Recording paused: 4:19.8]

28Part II- Snap: 00:06.5

29AB: Tell us about the University of Hawaii and your experiences there.

30JH: Well, at the University of Hawaii I focused on marine biology, that was my love. And I just  
31spent my every waking moment studying and learning out on the reef, and it's quite a shift  
32coming from the Atlantic Ocean to the coral reefs of Hawaii. And so, it was probably the most  
33wonderful period in my life being a student at the university of Hawaii.

34AB: A whole new ecology to learn . . .

35JH: Yeah, but one you've dreamed about your whole life.

36AB: Great. And then from the University of Hawaii, you went on to get a Masters degree or  
37Masters degrees at UC Irvine?

38JH: Yes, uh-huh, I went and got a Masters degree in population and environmental biology,  
39specializing in urban ecosystems.

40AB: And was the intent to come back to Hawaii after that?

41JH: Oh, yeah. In fact I did the entire masters program, two-year program, in three semesters  
42simply so I could get back home.

43AB: Faster.

44JH: I had come to Kauai and spent the summer on Kauai before my masters program, and I  
45was the cook in the Rice Mill Restaurant in Hanalei. I don't know if you remember the old rice  
46mill. But just magical, living on the north shore, working in Hanalei, it was hard to uproot and  
47go to Southern California, but I decided I wanted to do it in the shortest possible time, so I did.  
48AB: And why did you go to UC Irvine rather than continuing at the UH Manoa?

49JH: Because Manoa didn't have the kind of program in environmental biology that I was  
50interested in. It was really, uh—my whole drive was to try to protect the environment. And I was  
51born and raised environmentalist, spent all my time really in natural history, and out in the  
52wilderness, studying animals and fish and things like that. So, when I came to Hawaii, I was  
53really quite shocked and disappointed because of the vision I had of Hawaii was the drive in  
54from Nimitz into Waikiki. And so I was just dumbstruck that this was, that this had happened to  
55this beautiful place. And I remember walking through Waikiki, I think it was the second or third I  
56was there, and seeing, passing a realtor shop and seeing some scenes and some property for  
57sale on Kauai. And it looked beautiful. And so I said, this--that looks like what I had in mind

58when—and so as soon as I was able to save up some money, I was tutoring in math and  
59science, I flew over here and fell in love. And from that minute on, I was determined that Kauai  
60was going to be my home.

61AB: And did you bring your... any of your other family over here in those early years?

62JH: Well, I, uh, got a job teaching at Kauai Community College, teaching oceanography. And  
63I'm an only child; my parents were retired, living by themselves in Delaware, cold country. And  
64I convinced them to come out of retirement, sell everything, and pack up and move to Kauai.  
65And so that's what we did. And I found a little piece of property dirt-cheap at Anini Beach,  
66which [laugh] was possible in those days. And we got it, and my parents came and the three of  
67us built our home. And that was an experience because you know we had feral bulls come  
68down at night and tromp through the house site. We lived in tents, building the home. But it  
69was absolutely wonderful. Absolutely wonderful.

70AB: And you and your dad built the house?

71JH: And my mother. Yeah, all three of us.

72AB: And when was this, can you give us a date?

73JH: Yeah, that would have been umm, '74.

74AB: '74 and that was when you were at Kauai Community College.

75JH: That's—that's when I was at Kauai Community College '73 and '74.

76AB: And then you returned to Kauai as the marine advisor?

77JH: That's right.

78AB: And that was in when?

79JH: That was right after that, after teaching at the community college. Um, a new program  
80started up. The University of Hawaii was the designated Sea Grant university, anomalous to  
81the land grant status. And they were setting up a new program to have marine advisors on  
82every island, and so I applied and was fortunate enough to get hired. And that job basically  
83was to serve as an extension agent in things marine. So, fisheries, aquaculture, marine  
84conservation, and that was of course an ideal job for me. One of my programs was to train kids  
85in marine conservation and Hawaiiana. And so over the course of the next six or seven years, I  
86took over 12,000 kids, ranging from first graders all the way up to community college students,  
87out on the reef during the day, night time, learning about conservation, the ecosystem, how the  
88ancient Hawaiians used and conserved the marine ecosystems. Wonderful experience.

89AB: And you didn't have problems with the DOE to get them out there without a liability?

90JH: No that was in the old days that was in the old days. But it was funny, I'll run into someone  
91—not too long ago I ran into this woman in line at a movie theater in Honolulu, and she had  
92armloads of kids, and she said, "Mayor Harris, you don't remember me." And I was trying to  
93think, did I date this woman? And then she said, "You took me on the reef walk when I was in  
94fourth grade!" [Laugh]

95

9606:38.4

97AB: What other activities where you involved in outside of your marine advisory work on the  
98island?

99JH: Well . . . I came to Hawaii at a time that the issue of growth was front and center. And  
100really that issue defined I think the next 20 years on Kauai. And in the early '70s, there was a  
101big push to urbanize large tracts of land and develop lots of the shoreline. There were huge  
102developments planned for the Hanalei area, Princeville, Kilauea, the sugar company was going  
103under, and there were plans for condominiums all along that coast. And so, we were very  
104concerned, those of us who loved the place, and we formed an organization, Malama Hanalei.  
105And we organized to provide testimony at the land use hearings, write environmental impact  
106statements that had been omitted by developers, and it was there that the first mention of  
107Nukolii came up, in fact. We were going through all the projects, the properties that were  
108proposed for redesignation into urban, and here was this old dairy site that no one was really  
109familiar with, and I remember assigning that to somebody and we put testimony in even though  
110we really didn't understand the full extent of the project, and it really had been under the radar  
111screen for the rest of the island. And so, that whole experience—working with community-  
112based groups trying to really force good planning from the outside, outside of government—  
113was very eye opening for me. We felt at that time that our testimony regardless of how  
114relevant it was or how fact-based it was, was really irrelevant politically. That we didn't have

115any real impact on being able to change things because we were outside the system. It  
116appeared as though all the decisions had already been made before the public hearings were  
117held. And that was really alarming. And so it was that experience that, and the similar  
118experiences –Mahalepu, and some of the other landmark, controlled-growth, uncontrolled-  
119growth battles –that really shaped my future. And that's what led me into a life in politics.  
120AB: Were you involved in the State Land Use Commission in 1974? Is that what you were just  
121referring to?

122JH: Yes.

123AB: And Malama Hanalei . . . didn't limit itself to Hanalei, but the whole east side of the island.

124JH: It started the impetus where the proposals to develop Hanalei and Kilauea, but of course,  
125as we got into this land use commission, and we were learning all the intricacies of  
126development in Hawaii, we saw all these other problems. And of course, that led us to Nukoli  
127and then involvement with other groups. In fact, we worked some with Molokai on the Kaluakoi  
128development.

129AB: Anything else besides Malama Hanalei in those early years?

130JH: Yeah, we felt that there should be more fact-based decision-making, especially as it went  
131to land use planning. And so we formed the Kauai Community Research Group, which  
132basically we got offices, or use of the library space, the meeting space in the Lihue Public  
133Library. And we would do the environmental research, issues such as traffic, waste  
134management, the social-economic impacts of development. And we would try to provide this  
135information into the planning process. But once again, we realized that political decisions aren't  
136based on facts, they're based on politics. And so, we really we were not able to effect change  
137simply by being rational, and having the answers, and be able to provide good planning  
138alternatives. That really did not win the day. Ultimately, we realized what had to win the day  
139was political involvement.

14011:14.5

141AB: Which is going to lead us to the next state, but I want to ask you one more question. Who  
142was "we"? Can you think of any, who are the people that worked with you in those projects?

143JH: Oh, it's the familiar cast of characters. Um, JoAnn [Yukimura] for one. JoAnn was still at  
144Stanford law school when a lot of this began. Um, then of course, when she was able to come,  
145brilliant, articulate, and able to really bring some political charisma to the floor, that was a big  
146help. But it was groups—Kaipo Asing and a whole variety of others who are still here and still  
147tirelessly working on behalf of . . . uh, I think, Bushnell somebody was involved [laugh].

148AB: Vaguely, I remember that.

149CB: And that was JoAnn Yukimura.

150JH: JoAnn Yukimura, yes.

151AB: Well, you kind of answered the next one, but just in case—how and why did you get  
152involved in politics?

153JH: Well, I think it was because we really couldn't be effective any other way. And it was  
154difficult also being a mainland haole. In many cases, it was really uncomfortable even to show  
155up and testify at a public hearing, because you felt, and sometimes were made to feel, as  
156though you really had no right to have a voice in the decisions, and your input was not  
157welcome, in some corners. And so it was very difficult to try to get involved and play a part and  
158make a difference and offer good ideas when they really weren't welcome. And so I decided  
159that the only way was to bite the bullet and to get involved in politics. I never, in my life,  
160envisioned a life in politics. I'd never taken a course in political science or public administration  
161or anything. So, I didn't—I was a scientist and that's what I was interested, I was concerned  
162about the environment and protecting Kauai, basically. But I realized that was not going to  
163make a difference, so we had a constitutional convention in 1978, and I decided the thing to do  
164was to actually change the State's constitution to try to protect the environment, instead of  
165fighting these battles that were... appeared to be non-winnable. You know, different zoning  
166initiatives and land use initiatives that were already decided before the public hearing process  
167began. And so I announced my candidacy for the constitutional convention. Well, that was  
168quite an experience! A lot of people were not pleased that I was entering into politics. I had,  
169you know, a handful of death threats. Some of my closest friends didn't want to be affiliated  
170with me because they thought it was the...[laugh] inappropriate to be a candidate. But I  
171decided that that's the only way to make a difference and so I ran. And um... to the surprise of

172everyone, including myself was able to win the race.

173AB: How many delegates were there from Kauai!

174JH: There were six, I want to say. There were two from our district—Lehua Fernandes-Salling  
175and I were the two from the Kapaa up to the North Shore. And I believe there were either six or  
176four, I forget now, maybe there were four.

177AB: You can forget, it's been a long time [laugh].

178JH: It has been a long time, has been a long time. But again, it was interesting. We traveled to  
179Honolulu for the constitutional convention. And I had visions, having read all about, you know,  
180the United States constitutional convention, and I had visions of all these people coming  
181together with ideas and you know, intelligent discussion of concepts and policies, and all the  
182rest. And there was a cocktail party the night before the convention was to start. And an old  
183politician was holding forth in one corner and it was Kekoa Kaapu, who had served in council,  
184and I think the legislature, and he was also elected delegate. And he was explaining that  
185initiative and referendum was not happening, and this was, and that wasn't, and he listed the  
186things that were not going to be approved, and the things that were going to be approved. And  
187I was just dumbstruck and I said, well, it hasn't started yet, how'd you know? And he just  
188smiled a knowing smile. He said, all of these things were decided before hand. And so, you  
189know, a lot of the convention is just going through the public motion. But we were able to get  
190some critical pieces of legislation in there that have not had the impact that they could or  
191should have had. We were able to get a controlled growth amendment to the constitution. And  
192we were also able to get an amendment to the constitution to protect and preserve important  
193agricultural lands. And as well as open primaries, which really opened up the political process  
194to some newcomers that otherwise, would never have a chance with the old primary system.  
19516:47.0

196AB: Ok, so you felt that the constitutional convention actually achieved a good deal?

197JH: It achieved a modicum of success. The language in the amendments that we passed for  
198such things as controlled-growth and protection of ag lands was excellent, and what I learned,  
199basically, after the fact, that simply because the constitution says it shall be so, doesn't  
200necessarily mean it shall be so. In fact, in my last years as mayor of Honolulu, some 20 some  
201years after passing that constitutional amendment to protect agricultural lands, the legislature  
202was still debating how it should be enacted. And so basically, they didn't enact this  
203constitutional amendment because they didn't want to pass a high test of a two-thirds vote in  
204order to urbanize prime agricultural lands. They wanted to be able to facilitate urban  
205developments without having to pass that high test. And so it simply was never enacted, even  
206though it was part of constitution for 20-some years.

207AB: Were there other things that you really wanted to do that you weren't able to do there...  
208specifically?

209JH: Well, we had... there were a number of us who were trying to protect the environment in  
210that constitutional document, and most of our efforts were thwarted by the majority. But they  
211were able to corner a significant portion of the debate. It did elevate the whole issue to  
212controlled-growth when it hadn't been before. Controlled-growth became an issue in the  
213mayoral election in Honolulu. So I think it sparked, perhaps, some public dialogue that hadn't  
214been happening up 'til then.

215AB: So, you were basically, you were relatively pleased with the results of the constitutional  
216convention?

217JH: Yes, relatively pleased.

218AB: And in 1978 you ran for the legislature from Kauai and lost. Why did you run and what did  
219you learn?

220JH: Well, it was interesting, while I was at the constitutional convention I realized that this was  
221the way to make an impact. And so I wanted to run for office from Kauai so I could be on the  
222inside, making the policies, instead of on the outside trying to effect them. And I wanted to run  
223for something that I thought could win. Well, it shows you what a neophyte I was, how little I  
224knew about really the inside of Kauai politics. Ah... council member names—Jerome Hew,  
225Bobby Yotsuda—these were household names. It was inconceivable to me that I could run  
226against such household names and win. And yet the representatives and state senator –  
227Kunimura, Toyofuku, and Yamada— were less known to me. And therefore, I thought, perhaps a  
228better chance. Little did I know that these were the, this was the heavyweights of Kauai

229politics! And so, realizing that I might not win, my goal was to at least have a good showing  
230and be able to bring up these issues, environmental issues, issues of what we would call today  
231"sustainability." And it was quite a campaign because, of course, Tony Kunimura and George  
232Toyofuku, and Dennis Yamada were very tight. They ran as a team, the entire Democratic  
233Party united behind them as a team, but my goal was to make a credible showing so that I  
234would be situated, positioned to be able to run for an office and win it. And it was. I didn't win,  
235obviously, but I got a substantial number of votes and considering that I had really no time to  
236campaign for that office— I was at the constitutional convention the same summer that the  
237campaign was on —and so my campaigning was just a few weeks after the convention was  
238over. But it was a good enough showing to make... leave me to believe that I could have a  
239fighting chance if I ran for the council, which is really where I wanted to be because that's  
240where the land use decisions were being made.

24121:19.8

242AB: And so you did.

243JH: And so I did.

244AB: In 1980, you for the county council and this time you won.

245JH: Right.

246AB: And tell us about your experience on the council.

247JH: Well, the council race was an interesting one. Again, the pundits gave me zero chance of  
248winning. They said a mainland haole could never win an island-wide race; there were no  
249districts. It was an island-wide contest. But I had for so many years worked with the  
250community, teaching how to cook limu in ancient Hawaiian ways, to grandmothers, teaching  
251kids about the reef, teaching fishermen fishing techniques, and things like that. And I was the  
252umpire and coach for the senior citizens' softball league, and so I had lots and lots of friends  
253and support around the island, from personal standpoint. And decided it was worth... the race,  
254worth all the anguish. This was very difficult for my parents. They were very concerned. We  
255had more than one death threat left on the car windshield in the morning, and that sort of thing.  
256And so it was hard... hard to do it, but...

257AB: Were these aimed at you because you were a haole, or...

258JH: Well, that was the gist of the notes, yeah, that was the gist of the notes. But one of the  
259things I had worked on as the marine advisor was dealing with a problem we had in our reefs.  
260In the '50s, the Fish and Game had gone to the South Pacific and brought back a yellow  
261snapper and released it into the waters, thinking it would be a great game fish, not realizing the  
262environmental impact it would have. And of course, it multiplied incredibly, and so it was wiping  
263out local endemic fish, was eating all the baby crabs and lobsters off the reef. And no one was  
264catching it because it was a yellow fish, so to the Hawaiian community it was *kika kapu*. The  
265Japanese like silver-red fish, and so it was a beautiful fish, but no one was eating it. I tried to  
266convince commercial fishermen to catch it and of course, they didn't because there was no  
267market for it. So, I thought, maybe I could kill two birds with one stone. And so for my  
268campaign, my friends and I would go out at night and catch a couple tons of this fish, scuba  
269gear and surround nets. We'd stay up all night putting fresh fish in bags, "Get hooked on  
270Harris," and the next day I'd go door to door, giving out a bag of fresh fish, a recipe book, and  
271my campaign literature, which talked about... used basically the fish as an example of  
272environmental, good environmental management and bad environmental management. And  
273went to every household on the island twice in that campaign, offering fresh fish when people  
274were home. And so, to the surprise again, of many, including myself, I got the highest vote total  
275of all the candidates and was able to be elected to the council.

27624:49.7

277AB: That was taape, is that was what the fish is?

278JH: Taape, taape. And know its common in the markets... so the problem is less severe, but  
279it's still there.

280AB: Before you go on, let me ask you about one more thing, and that is the Jeremy Harris  
281Rule. Want to comment on that?

282JH: Yeah, well, it was... as soon as the elections were over, two very good friends of mine also  
283got elected in that election, Kaipo Asing and Rodney Yadao. Rodney was a papaya farmer in  
284Kilauea. Kaipo worked for the telephone company. And we made friends with Eddie Sarita,  
285who ran AMFAC, at the time. And we quickly organized the council and I became the

286chairman, or had the votes to become the chairman. Seven-member council and we had four  
287votes. And as soon as that leaked out, I think it was almost the same afternoon, I started  
288getting calls from the Governor's Office, and from the head of the Democratic Party in  
289Honolulu, "This can't be, you can't be the chairman, it has to be Bob Yotsuda has to be the  
290chairman." And I said, well, you have to tell the Governor, I'm sorry, I have four votes, and it's a  
291seven-member body and that's the way the organization is going to take place. And so Jimmy  
292Kumagai, the head of the Democratic Party got on the plane, flew over. And we met in  
293Nawiliwili and he basically explained the facts of life, that this was not to be, and I couldn't be  
294the chairman. And I just said I'm sorry, but this... there's going to be a new agenda with the  
295county council, and we're going to focus on environmental issues, and that's the way the votes  
296are, and I hope the Governor can understand that and appreciate it. This was Governor  
297Ariyoshi. Well, it was not well received; everything was done to try to stop that from happening.  
298There were offers to Rodney Yadao to make him chairman, splitting up the coalition so there  
299wasn't a basically environmental, controlled-growth bloc in the council. And Rodney, because  
300of his great integrity, turned down the chairmanship, simply because he believed in holding this  
301philosophy together on the city council. And we were able to prevail. But right after that, you  
302know, the stakes got a bit higher for me. At the time, I was the marine advisor working with the  
303university on Kauai. And before I ran for office, I got the approval of the university and of... it's  
304a federal programs of the national office... to run. In fact, I was told that the university  
305encouraged it's APT members to get involved in local government. And so, with that support  
306and encouragement, I ran. But after we had the battle with the chairmanship, the Board of  
307Reagents was convened and they had an emergency meeting, and they changed the rule from  
308being encouraged to participate in local government to being prohibited from participating in  
309local government. And it got dubbed the Harris Rule, because it only affected one person. And  
310basically, it meant that I had to—they assumed—to give up the city council, part-time city council,  
311meet-once-a-week-job that paid almost nothing—I forget, a few thousand dollars— as opposed  
312to my university career position. And I decided that I would learn to live on a few thousand  
313dollars and I gave up my university post to be able to continue to serve as a council member.  
314AB: Is that rule still in effect?

315JH: I don't know, it probably is [laugh], I don't know if they reversed it.

316AB: I have a feeling it's not, but I'm not sure either.

317JH: I'll have to check.

318AB: Just curious. You served two terms on the council from 1980 to 1984, and you've given us  
319an idea already, but if you could say a little bit more about what you hoped to achieve, and  
320your success.

32129:25.0

322JH: Well, the focus, the issue that permeated everything was really the growth issue. There  
323had been, you know, uncontrolled, unplanned, growth happening all though the '70s, and we  
324were beginning to see some of the impacts of that. We had continually warned of the costs of  
325growth. A few people made lots of money, you know, the hui makers who were able to buy  
326tracts of land, subdivide them, and sell them off for huge profits, and get them urbanized, and  
327so piece of land that maybe cost \$10,000 an acre, with the stroke of a pen and the change of  
328the line on the zoning map, was not worth hundreds of thousands of dollars an acre. And so  
329there were interests that were, had a good deal at stake, in continuing the status quo. But by  
330the same token, we warned of the unseen impacts, the increase we warned of traffic  
331congestion, of waste management problems, of a loss of lifestyle, and all these various things.  
332And that really was the undercurrent, the backdrop, the theme that underplayed most of what  
333happened in the 1970s on Kauai, I think, and '80s. And so, our focus on the council was to try  
334to start having better planning. And this is where Kaipo Asing cut his teeth, just incredible  
335integrity. And he would research an issue and every single thing about it. So he would spend  
336every waking moment, digging through the archives, and all the rest to have the facts when the  
337decision was to be made. But you know, how the Lihue development plan was going to be  
338designed, what was going to happen with Nukoli. I mean, these were the issues that  
339underpinned most of that time. And at that time, it was very contentious politics. The mayor  
340was Eduardo Malapit and the council was very closely divided on these issues. And so each  
341issue was often quite a big political battle. And I was at odds with the mayor almost on a daily  
342basis with competing press conferences and all the rest, and you know, I feel badly

343sometimes, when I went on to become mayor of Honolulu, and city council there would cause  
344me problems and give me grief, I would think it was *bachi* for all the trouble I gave poor Ed  
345Malapit during his tenure as mayor was up! But nonetheless, we tried to bring a new style of  
346government as well as a new focus to planning. We started things like the community talk story  
347session, where we'd go to every few nights we'd go to a different neighborhood to find out  
348what's the community thinking. What are the problems? How can the county serve you better,  
349from the pothole in the road to the planning issues in the community? And setting up citizen  
350advisory groups and a whole variety of things. To try to bring the community into the decision  
351making, instead of it being this closed circle of behind-the-doors, you know, select few making,  
352calling the shots with everyone else finding out about it later. The idea was to bring the  
353community together and get them involved in the decision-making process and we were very  
354successful at that. We had lots and lots of people involved. We didn't win all of our battles. We  
355tried to get money put in the budget to diversity the economy, into fisheries and aquaculture,  
356and a variety of things like that, and they were vetoed by the mayor, and bloody battles on veto  
357overrides on things such as that. But by and large, we were able to win some significant  
358contests. And again, become a voice for some good planning, which I think we hadn't had in  
359the past. So, even though we may not have won all the battles, we at least, the Nukolii one is  
360especially telling, where we won the referendum to have it down-zoned, and then the  
361developer actually came in and bought his own election to reverse it. So, we don't always win  
362in the end, but simply to have the battle enjoined, and the public dialogue, the public debate,  
363start focusing on these issues, and have people start thinking about them, I think was  
364important.

36534:30:00

366AB: When you say we, were you talking about the four of you on the council or...

367JH: Well, it was the four... the four of us happened to be the political voice of a larger group.  
368There were literally hundreds of people that had been involved in these issues. The various  
369organizations, the Mahalepu organization, the Hanalei organization, the Kilauea farmers co-op,  
370the Molooa co-op, Kilauea farmers association, so there were a lots of people that had  
371concerns about what was happening. The loss of agricultural lands, you know. Traffic was just  
372starting to get bad, as we had predicted as a result of some of the unplanned growth. And the  
373debate really was, well, you know, we need this to broaden our tax base. And yes, it broadens  
374the tax base, but you don't, we kept saying, you don't seem to realize it also increases the  
375costs. It means you have to build serious treatment plants and highways and more  
376infrastructure and waste management facilities. And it means, you pay in a qualitative way as  
377well. It means that instead of, you know just running out to Hanalei, you're stuck in an hour's  
378worth of traffic trying to get through Kapaa. And that may be difficult to quantify, but from a  
379quality of life standpoint, the costs are enormous, and they need to be calculated into these  
380decisions. And they weren't, but at least, I believe we started them.

381AB: And then in 1982, you were still on the council, but I believe JoAnn then ran for mayor.

382Actually she ran both those, 1980 and 1982...

383JH: Right.

384AB: And so she wasn't on the council, and you must of lost the majority because Raymond  
385Duvauchelle was elected the chair in the following...

386JH: Right. We lost Rodney Yadao, and that was a... the fact that we had taken over the  
387council, I think, came as a shock to some of the vested interests. And we had a local  
388newspaper, the Garden Isle, that was very supportive of our policies, very much interested in  
389good government and community planning, and environmental issues. And so the editor there  
390would, you know, cover these issues in a lot of detail when it hadn't been necessarily covered  
391in the past. And so as a result of our taking over the council, and the media that was being  
392focused on this issue, a newspaper was started by the development community, the Kauai  
393Times, and so, as well as a whole batch of new candidates to run for county council. And they  
394were successful in bringing their side of the story to the floor and controlling the politics on the  
395city council.

396AB: So was it much more frustrating to be on the council the second time?

397JH: It was, it was. It was basically Kaipo and I were the voices of controlled-growth and  
398environmental protection, at that time. So it was a more difficult row to hoe, but we were able  
399to still have the dialogue. It meant that every issue that came up on the council had debate

400when it related to these issues of environmental impact and community impact. And in the  
401past, they would... that wouldn't have happened, so sometimes even when you're in a minority  
402position you can have an impact.

403AB: How about Johnny Baretto, wasn't he on that council?

404JH: We appointed. There was a vacancy and John was one of the local leaders. He was a  
405fisherman and was concerned about the environment, things like that. So we appointment him  
406to fill a vacancy, I forget exactly...

407AB: It's Jerome, I think, Jerome Hew.

408JH: I think he slipped on to become the [county] clerk.

409AB: Yes.

410JH: I think that's what it was.

411AB: What year was that that you appointed...

412JH: That would have been I'm not sure, '83 or?

413AB: Yes.

414JH: Something like that.

415AB: '82 or '83.

416JH: And so there was another voice. Maybe that happened at the end of '82, possibly, I'm not  
417quite sure, but he was not able, I don't believe, to get re-elected. I think.

418AB: I'm not sure. I don't remember.

419JH: [laugh] It's sad that I don't. A lot of water under the bridge.

420AB: I just remember being, wondering what the best thing to do, was whether to run for mayor,  
421either for you or for JoAnn, because if either of you, both of you had gone on, there would have  
422been a four-three majority for the environmental perspective.

423JH: JoAnn and I were never on the council at the same time. We were always running for  
424mayor, and one of us... [laugh]

425AB: Ok, well, why don't you explain to us, I think you kind of already have in a way, but explain  
426to us why you decided in 1984 to run for mayor [of Kauai].

42739:38.5

428JH: Well, we were obviously frustrated not having a majority of the council. And it looked like a  
429golden opportunity had presented itself. The major was Tony Kunimura. And as I recall, and  
430this is, I believe, I was told at the time, that he had gotten into a disagreement with Larry  
431Mehau, and Larry had urged the police chief to run for mayor. And so, Roy Hiram then threw  
432his hat in. And it seemed to me, with both Tony Kunimura and Roy Hiram in the race, that that  
433was going to split sort of the old boy vote and so it seemed to me that if I was able to get in  
434that race, that I would have a good chance of coming out with a plurality of the votes, and then  
435winning, I believe it was Sousa who was running in the Republican primary, winning in the  
436general election. There was never usually a strong Republican contest. And so I threw my hat  
437in the ring, for that race. And for awhile, it looked like it was absolute, sure win, 'cause I  
438remember the polls where I'd have 49 percent, and Uncle Tony would have 27 percent, and  
439Roy would have 20-some percent, and so they were sort of splitting that vote, and I had just  
440under 50 percent of the electorate. And uh... but strange things happened through the  
441campaign. We'd have a fundraiser in Hanalei, and all the food would get delivered to Kekaha.  
442I'd take out an ad in the newspaper, and sort of an ad, countering that ad would be in the same  
443issue of the newspaper. But just, you know, strange things going wrong with the campaign. I  
444remember on election day, we had a huge phone bank, with all these telephones, we were  
445doing to get out the vote telephoning to get the people, and as soon as we opened the doors,  
446every phone started ringing. So, someone had gotten in and gotten the phone numbers of  
447every phone and had incoming calls so that no outgoing calls. So, we weren't able to make  
448one call on election day. But that was the sort of thing that was happening throughout the  
449campaign.

450 But the critical moment of the campaign was, I think two actually... there was a time when  
451we were getting close to the election, when I think there was some effort from the Governor to  
452get the supporters of Roy Hiram to shift back to Kunimura, to basically center all those bloc of  
453votes on the one candidate. And so that was critical because that really dramatically reduced  
454the impact that Roy Hiram was going to have in the election.

45542:39.5

456 But the second thing was uniquely Uncle Tony. And I'm sure it was very sincere, but in the



457middle of the campaign, Uncle Tony checked himself into the hospital, and he came out—I  
458remember he had a walker—he went through the campaign with a walker and the black  
459glasses. And it wasn't quite clear what was wrong with Uncle Tony, but we were all concerned  
460about his health. And then, right before the general election, I ran into one of his campaign  
461people, and we were friends, it's a small island, and he said, Jeremy, it looks like you've got  
462us. You know, it looks like you've got us. He said, we're going to try one more thing, but it looks  
463like you're gonna win.

464Well, there had been some incidents in previous campaigns when pipe bombs had gone off at  
465the Mayor's office. And I remember JoAnn had to—JoAnn Yukimura—had to spend some time  
466denying that it wasn't her [laugh]. She wasn't the one that set off the bomb, well, because she  
467was being portrayed as the radical, you know, because she had long hair and rode a bicycle.  
468And so... jaded as we were, we thought that perhaps a bomb would go off in the Mayor's office  
469and it would be laid at the feet of the Harris campaign. So, I had someone in the parking lot of  
470the Mayor's office all the time, with a camera, just to make sure that if some such thing did  
471happen, it was clear it wasn't one of our supporters that was behind it. But that wasn't it at all...  
472The Mayor had a faith healer come in from Honolulu and filled the convention center, and the  
473faith healer laid hands on Uncle Tony, and he took off his glasses, and praised the Lord, I can  
474see! And he threw down his walker, Praise the Lord, I can walk! And just days before the  
475election, Uncle Tony got the ultimate endorsement. Tony Kunimura healed by the Lord. And my  
476Filipino vote was dramatically cut! [laugh] In just a few days. And the end result was, I lost my  
477few hundred votes, I forget, five, six hundred votes.

478AB: Seven hundred.

479JH: Seven hundred votes. But it was interesting, the day after, we would have a breakfast right  
480after the election, a unity breakfast where all the winners-losers would get together and no  
481hard feelings and you know. And Uncle Tony told me at that breakfast with some glee and the  
482colorful language he was known for that there was no way this mainland haole was going to  
483win. And he told me that he had placed someone in my organization way, way, way before, and  
484it was a plant. And so this person who was critical in my campaign, and was a family friend,  
485and all the rest, had actually been working for the Mayor, and sending the food to the wrong  
486place and giving out the phone numbers, and all the other things. And so he was an inside  
487mole. And this was so far beyond my level of expectations! But it was a good lesson, it was a  
488good lesson.

48946:32.3

490AB: Very interesting. The Garden Island didn't cover the faith healer.

491JH: Oh, I think it was. I think it was in the Advertiser. It was the Advertiser.

492AB: Ok, I could go back and look again, too.

493JH: I'd like a copy of that if you get a copy.

494AB: It'd be interesting. One of the things that you seem to do quite successfully, you just  
495alluded to it, is that you were able to do very well among the Filipino community here in your  
496election. Have you any explanation for why you did so well among the Filipinos?

497JH: Well, I had a great affinity. I mean sometimes you just, you know. But I really became part  
498of that community, both here and in Honolulu. And the Filipino community became my, really,  
499my strongest vote base. And I would spend a lot of time in that community. At the time, when I  
500first ran, I was dating a Filipina gal I had met at the community college. But I spent a lot of time  
501in that community, and really was sort of part of that community, and the same in Honolulu. So,  
502I felt that the Filipino community was under-represented in Hawaii politics. They represent the  
503significant portion of the population, they were not receiving a significant number of the county  
504or city and county of Honolulu positions, and the so the goal was really to try to bring them into  
505local government. In Honolulu, I was able to do that having won, by bringing in leading  
506Filipinos to head up departments and become my chief of staff, for instance. In fact, a Kauai  
507girl. But so I had good support and still do with the Filipino community. And you know I... if you  
508think back at what it takes to get elected, the amount of energy that has to go in it, the amount  
509of time that has to go in it, it is literally hundreds of thousands of hours of people's time. You  
510know, we'd have a chicken hekka fundraiser for three dollars a head, you know, someone had  
511to go up in the mountains and cut kiawe, and someone had to go up in the mountain stream  
512and pick watercress, and you know, somebody had to you know, kill the chickens and pluck the  
513chickens, I mean this was really grassroots. This was, you know, everyone putting a huge

514amount of effort in. And when you work day to day, through months and months of campaign  
515with people who are doing this out of the goodness of their heart, because they believe in you  
516or they believe in what you stand for, or just because they're your friend, and they make this  
517huge sacrifice! It's absolutely unbelievable. And talk about humbling, 'cause that you know you,  
518if you win, you are able to enjoy the position, but they basically get their satisfaction from you  
519being able to hopefully change their lives in some way. And that's such a difficult thing to do, to  
520make the wheels of government actually work in your favor, and change direction, is  
521enormously difficult. It's like trying to turn an oil tanker that's heading towards the reef. Really  
522difficult. And so, throughout politics, you always wish you could do so much more than you can  
523actually do once you get in, because it's...you know, our government structure is not designed  
524to accommodate change. It's designed to resist change, as you well know, that's why it is so  
525complex and so many checks and balances. But that also makes it difficult when you have  
526serious problems, as we do today, and you're not able to get the government to respond.  
527AB: Just a comment, I noticed that in that 1984 election that you won both Hanamaulu and  
528Kekaha. Although... you didn't win Kaumakani, which is another strongly Filipino community.  
529And one of the comments in the newspaper was that you had angered some members of the  
530ILWU leadership who urged the Filipino union workers that they had... to vote for Tony,  
531because you claimed that you were the only one who was supporting sugar, whereas every...  
532others were doing it as well. I just thought I would pass that on to you.  
533JH: Why, I didn't know that. See? I've learned something.  
534AB: [laugh] All you have to do is go back and read The Garden Island from 40 years, 30 years  
535ago or so.  
536JH: [laugh]  
53751:25.1  
538AB: Ok. Anything else that you learned from that campaign? I mean, you've, maybe you've  
539provided us enough.  
540JH: I think...  
541AB: I know that you said much the same kind of thing when you... in your interview after your  
542defeat, the fact that you were humbled by the tremendous outpouring of aloha that had been  
543given to you and the tremendous amount of work, and the huge number of friends that you'd  
544made doing that.  
545JH: Yeah.  
546AB: We've talked about a number of these things, but I just want to ask you if you have any  
547other comments that you'd like to make, say, the old guard? Who was in the old guard besides  
548Tony? Was Turk Tokita a key to the old guard or were there other people that you would think  
549of when you think of the old guard?  
550JH: Well, the old guard... and the old guards did amazing things and accomplished a great  
551deal for Hawaii, there's no question about that, and so I speak of them with respect. Even  
552though we disagreed on these sorts of issues that relate to growth and environmental  
553sustainability and things like that. But they were transformational, obviously, for Hawaii. But it  
554was the Governor Ariyoshi and that, basically that, you know... monolithic Democratic  
555machine. It was basically who Tom Gill ran against. Tom Gill was sort of, you know, an early  
556person to articulate many of these issues, and go against that way of thinking. And so, I think  
557we've seen the same issues continue. I certainly don't think they were resolved in the '70s and  
558'80s. They're not new any longer, and perhaps, they aren't the sole focus of so much of the  
559politics as they were back then. There are so many other issues that... have joined the floor.  
560AB: I did notice that when you ran for the mayor here on Kauai, your advertisements and your  
561public pronouncements had very little to do with the environment, that you were talking  
562primarily about taxes and about open government. Those were the two issues that kind of  
563dominated the campaign. Any comments about that?  
564JH: Right. Yeah. You have to talk about things that effect people's lives. And sometimes you  
565don't always do that directly. If you'd simply talked about environmental sustainability that may  
566be nice for some people, but they don't necessarily see how that affects their life. But if you  
567start talking about diversifying the economy, protecting agriculture, diversifying agriculture,  
568diversifying the economy into fisheries and aquaculture, these things that are critical to  
569sustainable economy and a sustainable island, without talking about the environmental...  
570without talking about it from an environmental sustainability standpoint. And at the time, the

571social issues were also coming in and that was where the crime and the taxes. We were  
572having lots of local families losing their homesteads, their piece of property, they would have  
573kuleana lands, maybe on the beach, that had been in their family for generations and  
574generations, and now all of a sudden the property taxes were \$8,000 a year! And there was no  
575way they could pay the property taxes and they were actually losing their property, having to  
576sell their property, or having the County take it and sell it simply to pay the taxes. And that was  
577just, you know, heart-rending, that was terrible! And so, these were all components. The  
578sustainability issues are not really only environmental issues; they are also social issues. And  
579the very fabric of Kauai was really being torn with the tax problem. You know they had talked  
580about our opponents and the debate had talked about how growth was going to broaden the  
581tax base. Well, one way it did that was by shooting the values of real property out of reach of  
582many families, so that kids who were growing up here couldn't afford to live here. They couldn't  
583buy a home after they graduated from high school or college. They had to move off to the  
584mainland or Honolulu, the mainland more often than not. And people couldn't afford to hold on  
585to their homes because, and their land, because of the taxes. So, all of it are components of  
586the systemic problems of poor planning and uncontrolled growth.

58756:41.3

588AB: Let's see... how about Kauaians for Justice? What was that about?

589JH: Well, that was an organization we formed—this had to do with the crime problem, you might  
590recall at that time, with the growing population, and with the growing urbanization. We saw this  
591great upswing of crime, that we were having big increases in the burglaries and thefts and all  
592that sort of thing. And we... there were a lot of people who were concerned that the criminal  
593justice system wasn't working very well. There was sort of cross-the-board criticism of some of  
594the judges that were not handing down sentences, they thought, to repeat offenders and things  
595like that. And so we organized the Kauaians for Justice and basically what we would do is  
596simply go and attend courtroom sessions. That was all. So, we'd have instead of it being an  
597absolutely empty courtroom when the cases were being heard and decisions were being made  
598and the verdicts were being given, there would be ten or fifteen citizens sitting there watching,  
599because we thought that simply having a community presence would bring about better  
600criminal justice system. And I think it did, I think it focused concerns within the judiciary that  
601public is aware of these issues, public's watching, and so we need to take the public concerns  
602into account.

603AB: What political lessons did you learn from your experience on Kauai? And were you able to  
604use that experience during your political career in Honolulu?

605JH: The interesting second part of your question is—certainly, I was able to use it. Lot's of  
606lessons learned. Good ones and bad ones. Some disheartening lessons: learning that far too  
607often the game is already fixed behind closed doors, before the public debate begins. I learned  
608that in many cases, the right does not win out, that money often wins out, that you know,  
609vested interests have far too much influence in decision-making, and that the community  
610doesn't play nearly the role that they should. And that's not just the politicians, you know. It  
611was Churchill that said in democracy, people get the kind of government they deserve. And  
612that's very true. And if you stay home and you don't go to the public hearings and you don't  
613testify at the Council hearings, do all the rest, go to the court to watch the cases and all the  
614rest, you get the government you deserve! But our goal was to try to bring those people in with  
615the idea that if you bring people in, and they start playing a role, they're gonna have a stake in  
616the decisions. They're going to have an emotional stake; they're going to have an intellectual  
617stake. If they're ideas are part of the project that's being proposed, or had been incorporated  
618into the policy, then they're more likely to stand up and fight for it and defend it, and it's more  
619meaningful to them. If the policies that are being set are going to affect them personally in a  
620positive way or their kids or the schools or their economic future, they're going to have a much  
621bigger stake and a much more profound attachment to the process and to the end result. And  
622basically learned that, that the only way to open it up and to try to get some sunshine in there  
623and try to get some better decision-making, was to have it a more community-based process.  
624And I also learned that politics can be, ah, can be full of dirty tricks, and not an easy row to  
625hoe.

6261:00:57

627AB: Looking back on your experiences here on Kauai, would you say that your major goals...

628were your major goals realized, or were they... to what extent were they realized?

629JH: Well, they were only realized partially, I mean, my goal was for Kauai to become a model  
630sustainable island community that we could show the rest of the world how it should be done,  
631how you can do sustainable land use, sustainable transportation systems, and energy  
632efficiency, and you know, wean ourselves from fossil fuels, have good land use planning that  
633creates livable communities, walkable communities. To build an island that's not, you know, not  
634designed around the automobile but is designed around families and pedestrians. I mean all  
635those things. Of course, we didn't accomplish all of that. We were able to nudge it in that  
636direction, and spark the public debate, and stop some bad things from happening, and  
637promote some good things in terms of land use planning. I think we've had better land use  
638planning in the last 15 years than we had in the previous 15 years. And that's we had people  
639like JoAnn Yukimura and Kaipo Asing dedicate their lives to this island. And the thousands of  
640people behind them who were at the meetings and doing the research and you know, providing  
641the inspiration, and holding the signs, and all the rest. I mean it was... a huge population on  
642this island was really motivated and inspired by people like Kaipo and JoAnn. And were they  
643successful, you know, in all they hoped to do? No. No, I think they would all agree that the  
644success was moderate, but Kauai is a lot better place than if they hadn't... felt the fight. A lot  
645better place.

646AB: I think I would end there, because obviously you're one of those people, too. We should add  
647your name to Kaipo's and JoAnn's.

648JH: They put the years in! My fight turned into a Honolulu fight.

649AB: Ok, any questions?

6501:03:32.8

651CB: Well, you obviously are an independent thinker, and maybe it's youthful vigor 'cause you  
652know you came in the '70s and... so that was impressive. I've always heard that you broke the  
653barrier, that therefore it could be tried, so you were leading the way for change in many ways. I  
654just was impressed about the courtroom. How do you convince 10 – 15 people to come in and  
655sit in a courtroom and spend their afternoon doing that versus watching television?

656JH: Oh, we didn't need any convincing... there were so many people who were upset by things  
657that were happening, and you know, they didn't know how they could effect change, because  
658they had no say in who becomes a judge. And so we decided, well, just going and showing  
659that we care! That we want to see a fair... a fair process, you know? And so, it was such an  
660eye opener for the judiciary [laugh] all of a sudden have a courtroom... have a third of the  
661seats filled in the courtroom was very unusual to them, you know!

662CB: Was the goal to change sentences for certain crimes?

663JH: The goal was to try to have the judiciary tighten up especially in the crime spike that was  
664happening on Kauai. And these were not violent crimes, these were primarily... although there  
665were a number of, we had a number of rapes and things like that that were occurring, that had  
666alarmed the community. But it was mostly property crimes, and those are things that we  
667predicted were going to happen, as we had faster growth. Drug crimes and property crimes,  
668we knew those would be on the upswing, and in fact, they were. Yeah.

669AB: During your campaign, you— for mayor— you produced a half an hour television program  
670called *Ho'oponopono*.

671JH: Right.

672AB: Do you still have that, a copy of that?

673JH: I don't know. I'll have to look for that. It would be in an old beta format or something...

674AB: Because if you do, I think it would be really important for you to make it available to the  
675Hawaiian Historical Society, the Kauai Historical Society...

676JH: I'll look for that. I assume there's still a way to convert from beta to digital.

677AB: Unless it's totally covered in mold, but even then you might be able to do it.

678CB: You only have it on beta?

679JH: I don't know that I have it even on beta.

680CB: ... or VHS?

681JH: I mean back then, it would have been beta.

682CB: Well, just take a look...

683JH: Well, I'll dig it up...

684AB: It's important to have that if it's still available.

685JH: That would be fun to go back and look at that.

686CB: Is there any question we forgot to ask you? Did we overlook something?

687JH: No, I don't think so.

688CB: If you were going to give someone advice today about trying to change the community or entering politics, can you think of something you might offer?

690JH: Well, I hesitate to say... I used to... every school group I'd go to, every high school, every commencement address I'd give, I would urge the young people to get involved in politics, to run for office. And I stopped doing that a few years back, because it is such a sacrifice. When you're involved in elected office, it is basically combat, it's combat at every day. And you wake up to the radio going on, and it's a new report, and its, you know, its going to be critical, and someone's attacking you, and so you put on your armor every day. And every day you're in front of the TV camera and you're fighting, you're fighting somebody every day! And that really is not a life that many people can live through and I would much rather have my children become marine biologists than politicians. We NEED good people in elected office, somebody has to make that sacrifice, somebody has to be there for the public good as opposed to the personal gain. But it is a huge sacrifice to make and I couldn't look students in the face any longer and tell them that that was what they should do with their lives, you know?

702CB: You need a good support structure...

703JH: Well, you need a whole change in the body politic, you know, we just are... our whole system is so broken, its so broken that... well, you look at President Obama, I mean, a brilliant man, certainly knows what should be done, and yet look at the last two years, and look at the Congress now. I mean, you know? It's a flawed...

707AB: We get the government we deserve.

708JH: Exactly right, exactly right... the problem is not the politicians. I mean people basically act in self-interests, you know, whether they're politicians or teachers or park caretakers. People generally act in self-interests. And unless you have an informed, educated, involved electorate, you're not going to have good decision-making. You're not going to have good decision-making. And if you can convince people simply by saying it, that there are going to be death panels, um, then your society has no chance [laugh]. Has no chance.

714AB: So, we need good teachers.

715JH: Yup!

716AB: From the bottom up.

717JH: Right, right!

718END- Snap: 1:09:48

719